

**JOINT STATE/COUNTY
MAUI INTERIM TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JANUARY 2002

In cooperation with:

County of Maui, Department of Public Works & Waste Management
State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration

Prepared by:

State of Hawaii Department of Transportation
Statewide Transportation Planning Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The population on the island of Maui has grown significantly over the past several years. Based on Census 2000 information, the population on the Island of Maui has increased 28.8 percent over the period 1990-2000. This growth in population has resulted in a commensurate increase in traffic demands on the island's transportation system. In those areas where the transportation system has insufficient reserve capacity to accommodate the increase in demand, traffic congestion has occurred. Although there are several major roadway improvement projects currently underway that will provide relief to many of these congested areas, there is a growing sense of public frustration with existing traffic conditions.

PURPOSE

This Joint County/State Maui Interim Transportation Plan (Maui ITP) is a joint effort between the County of Maui and the State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation (HDOT) to develop interim solutions to relieve traffic congestion on the island of Maui while long-term solutions are being pursued. This collaborative effort was developed under the auspices of the Countywide Transportation Planning Process – Maui (CTPP-M) to involve the appropriate parties and secure their commitment and support of the recommendations. This effort also attempts to consolidate multiple efforts to develop alternative solutions to mitigate traffic congestions, including the efforts of the West Maui Traffic Action Committee and the Mayor's Transportation Action Committee.

STUDY PROCESS

The study process included a review of existing transportation plans and reports to identify measures previously recommended and an investigation on the status of recommended improvements underway. Interim strategies were explored and alternatives identified and evaluated. An ad hoc Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was convened to provide assistance in verifying focal problem areas, and recommending and screening viable solutions/projects.

Current Plans and Planning Efforts

Various transportation planning efforts conducted for the island of Maui include the Maui Long-Range Land Transportation Plan (LRLTP), Kihei Traffic Master Plan, the Lahaina Traffic Circulation Plan, and the Strategies to Link Central and West Maui report. In addition to these plans and reports, the Mayor's Transportation Action Committee also prepared a report identifying areas of congestion and alternative solutions to relieve congestion island-wide; and the West Maui Highway Action Committee developed various recommendations to reduce congestion in West Maui. Information gathered from these reports and committees was used as an initial screening to identify problem areas and formed the basis for the development of some of the alternative interim solutions.

Status of Ongoing Projects

Many transportation improvements identified in the transportation plans and documents identified above have already been initiated. Several roadway improvement projects are in various stages of planning and design and, in some cases, construction is due to begin shortly. In those areas where construction is scheduled to begin within the next five years, interim improvements may not be necessary or cost effective. The status of ongoing roadway improvement projects being pursued by the HDOT and the County of Maui, Department of Public Works and Waste Management (DPW) was, therefore, gathered and reviewed.

Alternative Interim Strategies

The review of the deficiencies identified in the transportation plans and documents, status of ongoing State and County roadway improvement projects, and discussions and comments from the CAC resulted in a screening of locations where interim improvements would provide the greatest benefit by providing temporary relief of traffic congestion until planned long term solutions are implemented. For the purposes of this report, the island of Maui was divided into four regions--Central Maui, East Maui/Upcountry, South Maui, and West Maui. Problem areas having opportunities for the implementation of interim measures to relieve congestion were then developed and evaluated in each of these four regions. Alternative strategies considered included accelerating the implementation of major roadway improvement projects through

phased construction, Transportation System Management (TSM) measures, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) techniques, roadway improvements, and alternative routes.

EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

Central Maui

Interim alternatives for Central Maui were not investigated under this effort as the recommended long term solutions have approached fruition and their implementation is scheduled within the next five years; and/or the ongoing projects have already incorporated phasing and TSM strategies to optimize our resources.

East Maui/Upcountry

Congestion through Paia Town is a major community concern. CAC members stated that the community strongly supports the construction of a bypass road around Paia Town that would relieve congestion. They stressed the importance of retaining the rural characteristics of the Paia community. The Maui LRLTP identified the need for a bypass road around Paia Town as a mid range priority project; however, CAC members expressed the Paia-Haiku communities' strong support for expediting this project. Because the Paia Bypass Road will take several years to complete the planning, environmental documents, engineering, land acquisition, and construction; interim strategies to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion through the town were considered. These strategies included peak period turn restrictions from Hana Highway, peak period parking restrictions, and a one-way reliever road. A number of CAC members expressed strong concern with these proposed interim strategies; in particular, peak hour parking restrictions were strongly opposed.

Phased construction of the Haleakala Highway Widening Project was also considered in the East Maui/Upcountry region. The project was recently amended to include emergency escape ramps. Where feasible, the roadway construction project could be separated into phases so that construction on other segments of this roadway can begin while the emergency escape ramps are being designed.

The Haleakala Highway/Hana Highway intersection currently experiences some peak period traffic congestion. The proposed widening of Haleakala Highway will relieve the existing operational problems, reducing peak period congestion. For this reason, the initial phase of construction should begin from Hana Highway.

South Maui

The Maui LRLTP identifies the need for a four-lane Piilani Highway as a long-range priority project. Piilani Highway, however, is already experiencing relatively heavy traffic congestion conditions during peak periods. For this reason, an interim strategy to expedite the widening of Piilani Highway to a four-lane facility has been proposed.

The County of Maui is pursuing the completion of the North-South Collector Road (Kenolio Road and Liloa Drive) through the Kihei area in the South Maui region. This roadway is being implemented in phases with the segment from Kaonoulu Road to Waipuiani Road to begin shortly. Upon construction of this segment, North-South Collector Road will be complete between Uwapo Road and Halekuai Road.

West Maui

The Honoapiilani Highway/Lahainaluna Road intersection experiences heavy congestion during the morning and afternoon peak periods due to traffic demand generated by the elementary, middle, and high schools located along Lahainaluna Road. Alternative routes could divert traffic away from this congested intersection.

The County of Maui has initiated a planning study for the extension of Dickenson Street towards the proposed Lahaina Bypass Road. The extension of Dickenson Street towards Lahaina Bypass Road with a connection to Lahainaluna Road would provide an alternate route for school generated traffic. The County of Maui is currently negotiating a contract with an engineering consultant for this planning work.

The West Maui Highway Action Committee independently developed a recommendation for an alternative route to divert traffic from the Honoapiilani Highway/Lahainaluna Road intersection. This alternative route involves the use of the cane haul road system previously used for sugar cane production, through the Pioneer Mill site. This alternative route also utilizes an existing bridge over Kahoma Stream and connects to Keawe Street in the Lahaina Business Park. Keawe Street in the Lahaina Business Park connects to Honoapiilani Highway across the Lahaina Cannery Shopping Mall.

Another strategy evaluated was the phased construction of the Lahaina Bypass Road with connections to Honoapiilani Highway. An initial phase of the Lahaina Bypass Road between the proposed connector in the vicinity of the Lahaina Business Park (possibly extending from Kapunakea Street or Keawe Street) and Lahainaluna Road could be implemented to provide an alternate northerly route to areas along Lahainaluna Road. Federal Highway funds could be used to construct the Lahaina Bypass Road.

The Lahaina Bypass Road alternative scenarios include the construction of a connector road between Honoapiilani Highway and the proposed Lahaina Bypass Road. The County of Maui would have to pursue the construction of this local connector road. There are two different alignments along which this local connector road could be constructed. One alignment is to construct this connector along the existing Kapunakea Street. This alternative would, however, involve the acquisition of several residential homes to accommodate the widened roadway. The second alignment would use Keawe Street in the Lahaina Business Park. Either alignment may involve ceded lands issues that must be resolved before pursuing this alternative. This effort would also require close coordination between HDOT and the County of Maui.

Honoapiilani Highway is essentially a two-lane roadway that currently experiences congested conditions during peak periods. The Lahaina Bypass Road is intended to relieve congestion on Honoapiilani Highway by diverting traffic onto this alternate route around Lahaina. The construction of the Lahaina Bypass Road between Honokowai and Puamana, however, will take several years to complete. The widening of Honoapiilani Highway to a four-

lane facility from Dickenson Street to south of Front Street was, therefore, evaluated as an interim strategy to relieve congestion. (Note: Honoapiilani Highway is already four-lanes north of Lahainaluna Road).

TDM techniques were considered on an island-wide basis since they are most effective at reducing travel demand between regions. The County of Maui has formed a Transit Action Committee to discuss and pursue transit alternatives on the island of Maui.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Past planning efforts have produced recommendations which when implemented, should address many of the existing and future congestion problems. It is recognized that improvements to various key facilities have been delayed and in the meantime, the demands on the transportation systems have continued to increase.

1. There is a need to expedite the completion of ongoing projects.
2. Interim strategies to provide near term relief appear viable and worthy of further investigation.
3. Transportation plans and programs need to be updated to ensure that current policies and conditions are accurately reflected; and appropriate measures are taken to adequately accommodate the ever-changing demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are intended to provide some guidance in expediting planned improvements and/or offering interim measures for consideration.

In general—

1. Phased construction of projects should be pursued when appropriate.
2. Where prudent, interim strategies should be pursued to provide near term relief.
3. Transportation plans and programs should be updated to reflect current policies and conditions.

Central Maui

(No further recommendations—the phased construction of Mokulele Highway is imminent).

East Maui/Upcountry

1. The Paia Bypass Road project should be expedited.
2. A study may need to be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the proposed interim strategies to reduce traffic congestion in Paia Town. The study should take into consideration the concerns expressed by a number of CAC members regarding these interim strategies. Alternative interim strategies to be evaluated in the study could include turn restrictions and parking restrictions during the afternoon peak traffic period (4:00 pm to 6:00 pm), and a short one-way reliever road. Traffic operations and economic data must be gathered and analyzed to evaluate the before and after conditions to assess the effectiveness of the strategies. Based on the findings from the study, interim improvements to address the congestion within Paia Town should be developed, in cooperation with the public agencies and in consideration of public comments.
3. HDOT should implement phased construction of the Haleakala Highway four-lane divided roadway-widening project. The first phase of construction should include the Hana Highway intersection with Haleakala Highway.

South Maui

(No further recommendations—the project to implement the Interim Widening of Piilani Highway to four lanes within the existing right-of-way is underway).

West Maui

1. Investigate the use of the Cane Haul Road as an interim roadway. Pursue an interim roadway alignment between Lahainalua Road and the Lahaina Business Park by using Keawe Street, the existing cane haul road through Pioneer Mill site, and connecting to Lahainaluna Road at Kahua Street.

2. HDOT should construct the first phase of the Lahaina Bypass, between Kapunakea Street and Lahainaluna Road; the County of Maui should construct the connector road from Honoapiilani Highway to Lahaina Bypass.
3. HDOT should initiate the project to widen Honoapiilani Highway to a four lane facility between Dickenson Street and approximately 1,000-feet south of Front Street.
Construction of these improvements should be done in two phases to utilize the funds already available. The first phase will include widening Honoapiilani Highway to four lanes between Dickenson Street to approximately 1,000-feet south of Shaw Street; the second phase of construction will be from 1,000-feet south of Shaw Street to 1,000-feet south of Front Street.

Other Miscellaneous Interim Measures Island-wide:

(No further recommendations at this time—there are several islandwide strategies currently in the works, which should be completed before new initiatives are undertaken).